

**Ambassador Mull's remarks at the
Polish Military History Museum, "Pacific on Fire" Exhibition
February 3, 2015**

Thank you, Professor Wawer, for inviting me to the Polish Military History Museum for the opening of the exhibition "Pacific on Fire 1941-1945." Congratulations to you, your staff, and especially to the curator of this exhibition, Mr. Wojciech Krajewski.

This exhibition reminds us that World War II was truly a global conflict. In Asia, as in Europe, it took the combined efforts of allied forces to defeat a fascist regime that was bent on territorial expansion. Just like in Europe, brave Poles from the Polish Home Army joined their allies in Asia, fighting alongside Americans against the Japanese Empire.

The daring feats of Polish fighter pilots who flew with the British Royal Air Force are well-known. General Witold Urbanowicz was among the heroic pilots who prevented a Nazi invasion of the British Isles during the Battle of Britain. While his exploits in Europe are celebrated, many visitors to this museum may not be aware of General Urbanowicz's heroics in the skies over China.

By the end of 1942, General Urbanowicz was serving in Washington as the Polish Home Army's Deputy Air Attache. He was already a seasoned fighter pilot who had endured more than his fair share of dogfights. If he had never flown another combat flight, he still would have been one of the most decorated pilots of World War Two. But Witold Urbanowicz was not content to work a desk job. In the spring of 1943, he ran into American pilot Merian Cooper, the founder of the Kosciuszko Squadron that helped defend Poland during the Poland-Soviet War of 1920. With Cooper's help, Urbanowicz joined the American "Flying Tigers" Squadron in southern China. Flying a P-40 Warhawk, Urbanowicz escorted bombers and transport planes, dropped food and ammunition to Chinese troops, and sank 15 Japanese river boats. When he was summoned back to Britain, U.S. General Chennault presented General Urbanowicz with the U.S. Air Medal. After the war, Urbanowicz settled in the United States, worked in civil aviation, and lived to see free Poland before passing away in 1996 at the age of 88.

Witold Urbanowicz's life story is another testament to the long history of American and Polish solidarity, military cooperation, and sacrifice for the cause of liberty. I am proud to say that the fighting spirit of General Urbanowicz is alive and well in the Polish and American armed forces today. In recent times our troops have fought bravely together in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, and in Iraq. And now the United States and Poland stand united as we confront Russia's aggression in Ukraine. We are taking steps to strengthen NATO defense capabilities, and we do this even as we continue to work together to defend our countries from the global scourge of terrorism.

Today, Poles and Americans confront these global security challenges together, just as we did in the 1940s in Asia as well as in Europe.

Thank you, again, to the Polish Military History Museum for bringing to life this fascinating page in the history of U.S.-Polish military cooperation.